

Submissive and Excitement Urination

Submissive Urination

Submissive urination is a normal appeasement behavior that a dog performs when they are trying to avoid conflict. It's important to remember that this response is based on the dog's perception of a threat, not the person's actual intention. Submissive urination may resolve as your dog gains confidence.

Your dog may be submissively urinating if:

- He is a somewhat shy or anxious dog.
- Urination occurs when someone greets him by bending over him and reaching down to pet him.
- He has a history of rough treatment or punishment after the fact.
- Urination occurs when he's being scolded.
- The urination is accompanied by submissive postures, such as crouching or rolling over and exposing his belly.

What Can You Do?

- Take your dog to the vet to rule out medical reasons for the behavior.
- Keep greetings low-key. You may need to ignore him or let him out to go potty before greeting him.
- Encourage and reward confident postures from him. Pet him when he is standing or sitting.
- Give him an alternative to behaving submissively. For example, have him "sit" or "shake" as you approach and reward him for following your cues, or get him to fetch you a toy or ball and greet him when he brings it back to you.
- Avoid direct eye contact - look at his back or tail instead.
- Get down on his level by bending at the knees rather than leaning over from the waist and ask others to approach him in the same way.
- Pet him under the chin rather than on top of the head.
- Approach him from the side, rather than from the front, and/or present the side of your body to him, rather than your full front.
- Don't punish or scold him - this will only make the problem worse.
- While practicing, try and have as many greetings as possible occur outside.

Excitement Urination

Excitement urination usually resolves on its own as a dog matures, if it's not made worse by punishment or inadvertent reinforcement.

Your Dog May Have an Excitement Urination Problem If:

- Urination occurs when your dog is excited – like when she is so excited to greet you or during playtime.
- Urination occurs when your dog is less than one year old.

What Can You Do?

- Take your dog to the veterinarian to rule out medical reasons for the behavior.
- Keep greetings low-key. Talking in an excited or high pitched tone of voice can cause it.
- Ignore him until he is calm.
- To avoid accidents, play outdoors until the problem is resolved.
- Do not punish or scold your dog.

Need help? Call our free pet behavior help line at (503) 416-2983.